

IV. REMARKS

Responsive to paragraphs 1 and 2 of the Office Action, new page 7 of the specification is submitted herewith, and claim 4 is amended to insert the correct proper name of the well known coupling agent 3-aminopropyl triethoxy silane. The original omission is regretted.

Responsive to paragraph 4 of the Office Action, generic claim 1 is rewritten in proper process language to clearly define the novel process steps (b), (c) and (d). The confused original language is regretted.

The present application is a divisional of parent application U.S.S.N. 09/698,413 which issued on March 23, 2004 as U.S. Patent 6,709,992 covering the novel products produced according to the present process.

In paragraph 6 of the Office Action the Examiner has rejected claims 1-3 and 5 as defining a process which is obvious from Masuda et al. Patent 5,978,639 in view of Kusano et al. Patent 5,425,832.

The Examiner acknowledges that Masuda et al. fail to teach critical step (b) of the present process in which a thin primer layer of a polyfunctional silicone composition is applied to the thin layer of elastomeric composition and is hydrolyzed to form a chemical bond therebetween.

However, the Examiner states that Kusano et al. teaches that aminosilane coupling agents can be used to enhance the adhesion

between a rubber composition and a fluoropolymer sheet material to form a composite.

Kusano et al. has no pertinence to the present processes or products. Kusano et al. relates to improving the bonding properties of fluoropolymer sheets for metal or synthetic resin coatings to form composite sheets by glow discharge plasma treatment of the fluoropolymer surface, and use of an adhesive which may be an aminosilane coupling agent. No hydrolysis step is disclosed and no chemical bonding is suggested. The formed composite sheets are not disclosed as being useful as continuous belts for toner image reception and transfer, or as having a smooth surface layer bonded to the primer layer of hydrolyzed silicone composition.

Responsive to the Examiner's Note, counsel points out that aminosilane coupling agents are polyfunctional, per se, and are not always hydrolyzed when used to produce coupling or cross-linking between different materials.

In paragraph 4 of the Office Action the Examiner combines Katayama et al. with Masuda et al. and Kusano et al. to show that 3-aminopropyl silane is a well known aminosilane coupling agent. Katayama et al. is similar to Kusano et al. in that it relates to the plasma surface-treatment of fluoropolymer bodies, such as hoses, to improve their bonding strength for outer resin layers. Silane coupling agents may be used to improve the bonding strength.

The Katayama et al. fuel hoses are not continuous belts for receiving and transferring heat-fusible toner images and do not have smooth release surfaces.

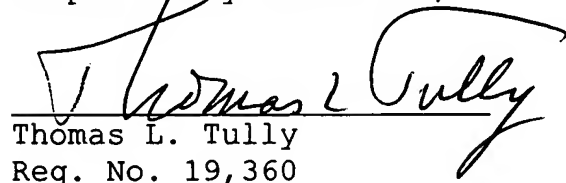
Claim 6 is rejected as being obvious from Masuda et al. in view of Kusano et al. in further view of Badesha et al. which is cited to show the existence of tetrapolymer elastomer polymers. Badesha et al. does not make up for the many deficiencies of the other references in teaching or suggesting the novel processes claimed herein.

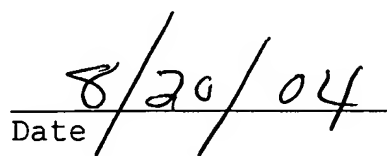
For the foregoing reasons it is respectfully submitted that the present claims 1 to 6 patentably distinguish over the combinations of references applied thereagainst, and allowance is respectfully requested.

For all of the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that all of the claims now present in the application are clearly novel and patentable over the prior art of record, and are in proper form for allowance. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration and allowance is respectfully requested. Should any unresolved issues remain, the Examiner is invited to call Applicants' attorney at the telephone number indicated below.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge payment for any fees associated with this communication or credit any over payment to Deposit Account No. 24-0037.

Respectfully submitted,


Thomas L. Tully
Reg. No. 19,360


Date

Perman & Green, LLP
425 Post Road
Fairfield, CT 06824
(203) 259-1800
Customer No.: 2512